

Organic Lawn Care

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Who am I?



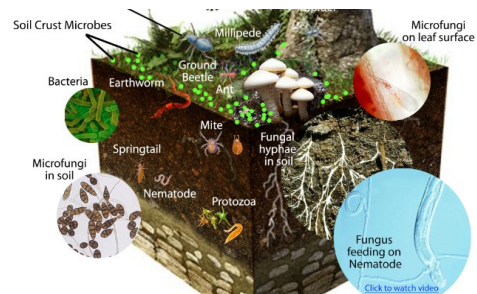
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Children's Hospital Playground



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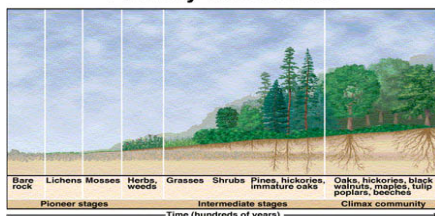
Start With the Soil



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Arrested Development

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Primary succession



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Root-feeding Nematode

- Fungal Hyphae ensnaring a root feeding Nematode to keep it from root



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Kentucky Blue Grass is Asian



- Lawn grass species are not native to North America.
- Grasses evolved in climates like England
- Hardiness zones 6-9 and double our rainfall

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What Grass Needs

Light
Water
Food

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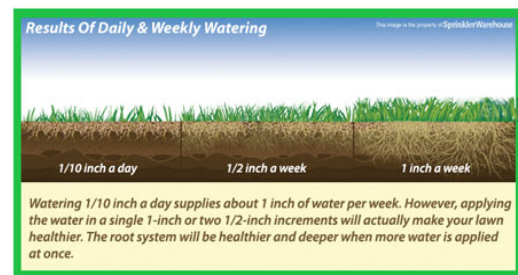
4 Hours of Sun



- This is what “shade” grasses need to be thick and healthy enough to keep out weeds.
- Creeping Charlie starts on bare soil in shade.

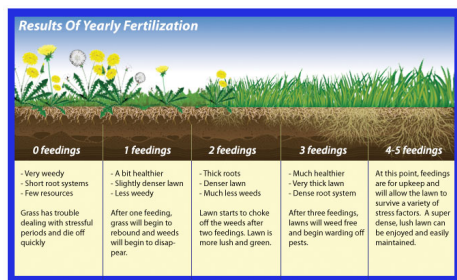
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Correct Watering



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Good Organic Food



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A Plan For Problems

Pests
Diseases
Weeds

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Grubs!



- Milky Spore Disease affects only Japanese Beetle grubs.
- Beneficial nematodes control all kinds of grubs.

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Beneficial Nematodes

- Deals with about 12 different kinds of grubs
- Certified organic
- Apply 2 or 3 times 2 weeks apart to achieve maximum control



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Crabgrass

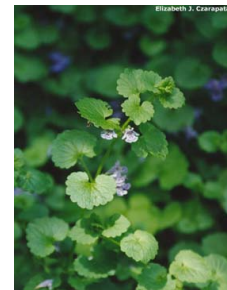
- Likes hot, dry, sandy, even salty soil
- Pull or rake large patches, add compost, reseed, fertilize and water.
- Mow 3" high and follow our organic program



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Creeping Charlie

- Imported !!
- Starts on bare soil in shade
- Sign of pH imbalance & calcium deficiency



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Dandelion

- taproot fractures compaction and gathers nutrients from deeper soil & deposits on top



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Weed Therapy

- Use de-thatching rake to remove weeds or hand pull
- Deep aerate with shovel.
- Top dress with 400 lbs. compost / 1000 sq ft (1/2 cu yd)
- Over-seed with Fine Fescue blend.
- Apply organic fertilizer
- DIY YouTube videos at www.organicbob.com

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Fiesta

- Very low toxicity
- Safe for aquatic invertebrates
- 3 applications 3 weeks apart when creeping Charlie is blooming
- Kills all broadleaf weeds



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The Most Organic Lawn



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Reduce with Natives



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Replacement

- Remove vegetation and debris.
- Till in quality compost.
- Grade soil, avoid compaction.
- Apply starter fertilizer and compost tea.
- Sow seed or lay sod.
- Water until turf is established.

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Before and After Seed



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Straw Mulch

Helps hold moisture and suppress weeds

EZ Straw is chopped, clean straw with an organic tackifier to make it stick



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Before and After Sod



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Renovate

- Deep aerate by hand.
- Top-dress with quality compost.
- Starter fertilizer.
- Grass seed blend.
- Compost Tea.
- Best time is late August through mid September
- Next best time is April through mid May

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What kind of grass seed?

Fine Fescues

- No mow fescue blend.
- Also called Cutless, Eco, Low Grow.
- Bluegrass requires twice the water and fertilizer.
- Perennial Ryegrass winter kills.



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Top dressing

- 140 # quality compost / 1000 sq. ft. or 520# for renovation.
- Good brands are Hsu's, Cowsmoo, Soil Essentials Premium Compost, The Mulch Store
- DO NOT use city compost



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Monthly Program

- April – Over seed at 3#/1000 sq ft, a half application of fertilizer, 150# quality compost / 1000 sq ft
- May & June – Hand weed and lightly seed the empty spots.
- July - It's too hot. Just water.
- August- Over seed at 3#/1000 sq ft, a half application of fertilizer, 150# quality compost / 1000 sq ft
- Sept. – A full application fertilizer.
- Oct. – Water until hard freeze.

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A Grass Garden

- Water 1 inch per week.
- Mow 3 inches or higher.
- Mulch grass clippings.
- Keep mower blade sharp.
- Follow an organic program.

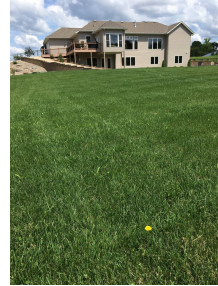
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What to Expect

- Takes up to 2 years for weed control, IF program is followed.
- Be ready, able, and willing, to supplement up to 1 inch water per week.
- Year 1 – Grass is thicker, greener, healthier
- Year 2 – Fewer weeds, more grass.
- Year 3 – Back off on watering, fertilizer, top dressing, over seeding.

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3 Year DIY Lawn



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Alternative lawns

- No mow fescue blends
- Mini or micro clover
- Bee lawns
- Dutch white clover
- Native plantings



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No Mow Fescue

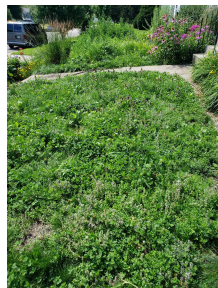
- A blend of fine fescues that were selected especially for MN
- Mow once or twice a year
- 1/6 fertilizer of bluegrass
- Needs very little water once established
- You can mow it if you want.



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Bee Lawn

- A blend of fine fescues, creeping thyme, self heal, and Dutch white clover
- Helps a wide variety of bees
- Developed by U of M Bee Lab



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Product Resources

- **Fertilizer** Look for organic certification seal. Only need ½ application in spring and 1 ½ in fall.
- **Seed** Organic seed expensive, hard to find.
- **Compost** Look for organic certification. DON'T use municipal or homemade. Weed seeds.
- **Herbicide** There is no organic herbicide that won't also kill grass.
- **Aerobic Compost Tea** Good \$150 machines on-line.

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Composts

- Test before you apply. Put in a pot and water. Any growth indicates poor quality.
- Mushroom composts and others from big box stores are pasteurized and no good.
- Good brands are Hsu's, Mississippi Topsoil, Cowsmoo, Mulch Store
- Bagged from Mother Earth Gardens
- Bulk from Landscape and Concrete Center and The Mulch Store

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Info Resources

- "The Organic Lawn Care Manual" by Paul Tukey
- www.pesticideinfo.org Look up product ingredients.
- www.organicbob.com Organic lawn Care info and services
- www.lightdarklandscape.com Native plant and pollinator design / build firm.
- www.bluethumb.org Rain garden and alternative turf resources

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We can live with it



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Monthly Program

- April – Corn gluten meal
- May & June – Compost tea & fertilizer, top-dress with quality compost once in May
- August- Corn gluten meal
- Sept. & Oct. – Compost tea & fertilizer, top-dress with quality compost in Sept.

A Grass Garden

- Water 1 inch per week.
- Mow 3 inches or higher.
- Mulch grass clippings.
- Keep mower blade sharp.
- Follow an organic program.